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### *The Berry family of Norwich*

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*Published in:*  
Publishing History

*Publication date:*  
2014

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Stoker, D. (2014). The Berry family of Norwich: The rise and fall of a book trade dynasty. *Publishing History*, 74, 67-95.

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## **The Berry family of Norwich: the rise and fall of a book trade dynasty**

A recent episode of the genealogical television programme 'Who do you think you are?' showed the celebrity cook, Mary Berry, discover that her great great great grandfather, Christopher Berry Jnr, was a Norwich printer who had published a directory of the city in 1810.<sup>1</sup> Inevitably, the programme concentrated on the more televisual aspects of the story, especially the fate of two other of her ancestors also named Mary Berry - Christopher's wife who entered the Norwich Workhouse together with six of her young children in 1819 and their eldest daughter who remained outside with her father. However, by this time there had been three generations of the Berry family connected with different aspects of the Norwich book trade. Tracing their complex family and financial relationships is made more difficult because different generations and different branches of the family used the same Christian names. Nevertheless, the Berry family provides an interesting case study of the trading conditions in a provincial city during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

### **Christopher Berry (1747-1770)**

The first member of the Berry family to be associated with the book trade was Christopher, the son of John (whose trade is not known) of St John Maddermarket parish in Norwich. At the time of his birth in December 1725, the city was the largest in the English provinces. During the course of the remainder of the eighteenth century it would be overtaken in size and prosperity by the slave trading ports of Bristol and Liverpool and the manufacturing centres of Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds. Nevertheless, Norwich flourished for most of the eighteenth century and there was a healthy trade in bookselling, printing, and local publishing.

Christopher Berry served his apprenticeship with Thomas Goddard (c.1675-1751,) one of the most enterprising members of the book trade in the early eighteenth century. Goddard had been in business as a bookseller 'near to the Guildhall' in the Market Place since 1695.<sup>2</sup> He commenced a series of book auctions in the city in 1704 and by 1706 had also established his own printing press and local newspaper. This was initially operated by a journeyman from London, but after 1707 by his fifteen-year old apprentice, William Chase. During the 1720s and 1730s Thomas Goddard and William Chase became two of the most prosperous tradesmen in the city. Another of Goddard's apprentices, Jonathan Gleed, served his term during the 1730s and had set up in business in his own right by 1740. It was in this year that the elderly bookseller took on the thirteen year-old Christopher Berry to replace him. Gleed would also become a noted auctioneer in the city during the 1750s, before going bankrupt in 1762.<sup>3</sup> The book trade and associated trades were clearly an attractive proposition for an ambitious young man at this time, but there were also risks involved.

Christopher Berry had completed his apprenticeship by April 1747, when he married Jane Godfrey and the following November, he opened a small shop in Dove Lane, one of the streets leading from the Market Place.<sup>4</sup> He became a freeman of Norwich, by service, as a stationer on 25 February

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<sup>1</sup> 'Mary Berry', *Who Do You Think You Are?* Series 11 (6), Wall to Wall Media Ltd, London, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Television. (This article incorporates genealogical research undertaken for that programme.)

<sup>2</sup> For the careers of Goddard and Chase's see David Stoker, 'The Norwich Book Trades before 1800 - a Biographical Directory', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, VIII, (1981), 79-125, pp. 103-4; 'Prosperity and Success in the English Provincial Book Trade during the Eighteenth Century', *Publishing History*, XXX, (1991), 1-58; 'To all booksellers, country chapmen and others: how the rural population of East Anglia obtained its printed materials (1570-1800)', in *Fairs, Markets and the Itinerant Book Trade*, edited by Giles Mandelbrote, Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies/Oak Knoll, British Library, 2007), 107-136, pp. 125-8, and 'Mr Baldwin's Sermon and the Norwich printers', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, XIII, (2004), 33-43, at pp.36-9.

<sup>3</sup> *London Gazette*, 1 March 1763. Issue 10292, p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Norfolk Record Office (NRO), St Mary in the Marsh Marriage Register 7 April 1747 and *Norwich Mercury*, 28 November 1747.

1748, but relatively little is known about his business over the next decade. The couple had two sons, John and Christopher, who were baptised in the church of St Peter Mancroft in April 1748 and July 1749.<sup>5</sup> As a freeman Christopher could also bind his own apprentices, such as Martin Booth who joined him in 1752 and would also later become a successful bookseller in the city.<sup>6</sup> Christopher's name begins to appear in the published poll books for the city, listing the names of the electors and how they voted, such as those for 1761 and 1768 where he is described as either a bookseller or stationer.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, he was an active freemason and in 1761 would serve as the Master of the Union Coffee House Lodge.<sup>8</sup>

The Berry bookselling business appears to have done fairly well in its early years but it only really began to take off after 1757 when Christopher took over the larger and better established business of James Carlos at the sign of 'the Bible and Dove' also in Dove Lane.<sup>9</sup> Provincial booksellers also sold a wide range of stationery, medicinal and other products at this time. Thus a newspaper advertisement from 1761 advertises the publication by him of *A catalogue of a large and valuable collection of books*, to be sold by him together with 'a curious air pump and also an electrifying globe with the apparatus.'<sup>10</sup> Further catalogues of books for sale were issued in 1764, and 1767.<sup>11</sup>

Over the next decade Christopher Berry's name began to appear on the imprints of various local publications in the capacity of a distributor, usually designated by the words 'sold by'. Thus he is one of four Norwich booksellers listed on *A new and accurate map of the county of Norfolk*, in 1757.<sup>12</sup> Other local publications to bear his name in this capacity were local sermons, the poll-book for 1768, pamphlets concerning minor local controversies and an account of *The various kinds of the heart or rather stomach-pain*.<sup>13</sup>

The printer Luke Hansard was an apprentice in Norwich in the early 1760s and his autobiography contains a brief reference indicating the status and continuing prosperity of the business:

We had six principal booksellers in our city. Three of them, Berry, Wardlaw and Booth with extensive libraries and men I conceive with learning equal to the Dodsleys, the Paynes and the Johnsons. For 4 out of these 6 booksellers we printed their annual catalogues and with two of the principal Mr Berry and Mr Wardlaw I was intimate and befriended.<sup>14</sup>

Thus during the 1760s the firm was clearly doing well for a provincial business, incorporating not only bookselling and bookbinding but also an 'extensive' circulating library. In fact it was thought, by Hansard at least, to be comparable with some of the great booksellers in London.

Christopher Berry died suddenly, aged 44, on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1770 and was buried the following day in St Giles' parish.<sup>15</sup> Two weeks later his sons announced in the local press that they would be continuing their father's business in partnership.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> NRO, St Peter Mancroft Register of Births 1 April 1748 and 2 July 1749.

<sup>6</sup> *Norwich Mercury*, 25 August 1759.

<sup>7</sup> *The Poll for Members of Parliament for the City of Norwich ...*, 1761, (Norwich: W. Chase, 1761); *The Poll for Knights of the Shire for the County of Norfolk...* 1768, (Norwich: W. Chase, 1768).

<sup>8</sup> H. Le Strange, *History of Freemasonry in Norfolk*, (Norwich, 1896) and *History of Union Lodge, Norwich, Issue 52*, (Norwich: Agas H. Goose, 1898).

<sup>9</sup> *Norwich Mercury*, 27 August 1757. This would later become 13 Dove Lane (now known as Dove Street).

<sup>10</sup> *Ipswich Journal*, 10 January 1761.

<sup>11</sup> Trevor Fawcett, 'Eighteenth-Century Norfolk Booksellers: a Survey and Register,' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, VI, (1972), 1-18, p.13.

<sup>12</sup> *A New and Accurate Map of the County of Norfolk*, ([London] Sold by .... C. Berry, 1757).

<sup>13</sup> For example Nathanael Torriano, *Seventeen Sermons on Various Subjects*, (Norwich: printed by J. Crouse for the author: sold by ... C. Berry and M. Booth in Norwich, [1767]), or *A Copy of the Polls of Harbord Harbord, Esq; Edward Bacon, Esq; and Thomas Beevor, Esq; for Members of Parliament for the City of Norwich*, (Norwich: printed and sold by J. Crouse, and may be had of Mess. Booth, Berry, ... etc., [1768]).

<sup>14</sup> *The Autobiography of Luke Hansard Printer to the House 1752-1828*, edited with an introduction by Robin Myers, (London: Printing Historical Society, 1991), p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 7 July 1770, and NRO, St Giles parish burials register.

## John and Christopher [II] Berry (1770-1782)

Only Christopher [II] (the younger of Christopher Berry's two sons) took up his right to become a freeman of Norwich, by patrimony, in March 1771.<sup>17</sup> (This may have been because John had inherited the freehold of the business premises and so did not consider it to be necessary?<sup>18</sup>) No record has been found for any marriage or children of Christopher but John married Anne Kiddel at Heigham (a suburb of Norwich) in January 1772. They had two sons, Christopher [III], who was baptised 23 March 1773 and John [II] baptised 12 February 1786 (both in the church of St John Maddermarket).

Sale catalogues were issued by J. & C. Berry in 1771 and 1772,<sup>19</sup> and their names jointly appear as distributors on the imprints of a number of local publications during 1770 and 1771.<sup>20</sup> However, there may have been a brief interruption to their partnership during 1773. In that year John joined with his father's former apprentice, Martin Booth, to purchase and sell on the extensive library of the deceased antiquary Thomas Martin of Palgrave. At the same time Christopher [II]'s name (alone) is found as a distributor on Joseph Phipps *The original, and present state of man*.<sup>21</sup> If there was a temporary break in their partnership, it was restored before April 1776 when the brothers jointly advertised 'A catalogue of a large collection of books, consisting of several libraries, lately purchased,' to be sold in Dove Lane. The same advertisement indicated a new area of activity for them:

The aforesaid J. & C. Berry, sell by auction, lands, houses, furniture, &c. &c. upon the lowest and most equitable terms, and hope, by a faithful and expeditious discharge of their duty, to merit the encouragement of the public.<sup>22</sup>

This attempt to break into the trade of auctioneering does not appear to have been successful, as by this time there were several well-established auctioneers in the city, most notably Jonathan Gleed (the son of the former bankrupt bookseller) who had teamed up with the son of William Chase. The brothers did not advertise any further auctions but were clearly looking for any new business opportunities. In February and March 1782 they ventured into a new field offering 'an eligible [insurance] plan to all persons liable to be drawn for the militia of the county of Norfolk.'<sup>23</sup>

Thereafter their enterprises mainly focused on the sale of books and other projects more specifically related to their trade, issuing a further catalogue in 1781. In September 1780 they ventured into small-scale local publishing by financing the compilation and publication of a poll book.<sup>24</sup> This publication was followed by a number of other small works all of which were 'printed

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<sup>16</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 21 July 1770.

<sup>17</sup> Norfolk Record Office (NRO), Norwich Corporation Records (NCR), Freeman's Books 2 (Register of Admissions, 1714-1752), 17B.

<sup>18</sup> On the 1780 Norwich poll John was described as both stationer and freeholder in Maddermarket, whereas his brother was merely a stationer (*The Poll for Members of Parliament for the City of Norwich, Taken the Eleventh Day of September, 1780*. (Norwich: printed by John Crouse, for J. and C. Berry, [1780]), p.38.)

<sup>19</sup> 'List of Sale Catalogues by Country Booksellers,' *Gentleman's Magazine*: 65.4 (October 1795): 841-843, p.841 and Fawcett, 'Eighteenth-Century Norfolk Booksellers: a Survey and Register,' p.13.

<sup>20</sup> For example, *Hymns, and Acrostic Poems, on Various Subjects*. (Norwich: Printed for the proprietor by R. Beatniffe, and sold by ... J. and C. Berry, at Norwich; ... 1770), and *The Complete Family Bible*; (London: printed for the author, by Brewman and Co. ... sold by ... Messrs. Berry, at Norwich ..., [1771].

<sup>21</sup> *Bibliotheca Martiniana. A Catalogue of the Entire Library of the Late Eminent Antiquary Mr. Thomas Martin, ...* [Norwich?, 1773], and Joseph Phipps, *Observations on a Late Anonymous Publication, Intituled, A Letter to the Author of a Letter to Dr. Formey, &c.* (London: printed and sold by ... Christopher Berry, ... Norwich; ..., [1767]).

<sup>22</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 20 April 1776.

<sup>23</sup> Advertised in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, 16 February- 2 March 1782.

<sup>24</sup> *The Poll for Members of Parliament for the City of Norwich, Taken the Eleventh Day of September, 1780*, p.38. This was advertised in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, 23 September 1780.

for J. & C. Berry' over the next few years: the printers employed for these were in Cambridge, Chelmsford, London and Norwich.<sup>25</sup>

John and Christopher Berry rarely advertised their business in the Norwich newspapers during the period between late 1782 and late 1785 but the bookshop continued to operate. For example, they advertised copies of *The London Songster* in November 1782,<sup>26</sup> and their joint names appear as 'booksellers, binders and stationers' at 13 Dove Lane in the first ever Norwich directory published in 1783.<sup>27</sup> By this time they appear to have given up the circulating library operated by their father as two other booksellers with such libraries are specifically noted.

The names of J. & C. Berry continue to appear on the imprints of small works by local authors published during the early 1780s,<sup>28</sup> yet the information from other records indicates that there were changes taking place in the management of their business. For example, 'John, son of Christopher Berry,' at last took up his right to become a freeman, by patrimony, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1782, eleven years after his younger brother; why he chose to do so at this time is not clear.<sup>29</sup> During the election of 1784 J. & C. Berry published the poll book, but only John is recorded as having cast a vote.<sup>30</sup> The Land Tax records for the city identify John and Christopher [II] as having paid for their business premises between the financial years of 1770/1 and 1783/4, but 'John and John' are given for the financial years 1784/5 and 1785/6.<sup>31</sup> This may have been an error in the records, but conceivably it could refer to an otherwise unrecorded son of Christopher II. (It cannot refer to John's son John [II] as he was not baptised until 12 February 1786.)

The poll book for September 1786 records both John and Christopher as having voted,<sup>32</sup> and the Land Tax records for 1786/7 and 1787/8 again record John and Christopher as having jointly paid: yet the wording of a subsequent newspaper exchange indicates that John was regarded as the senior partner of the two.

### **The 1786 Poll-Book**

Having successfully published poll books for the elections in 1780 and 1784, John Berry prepared to produce a third one for the election of September 1786, caused when the sitting member, Sir Harbord Harbord, was elevated to the House of Lords.<sup>33</sup> On this occasion he found that rival members of the local book trade were attempting to move in to his new found territory. The story is told in a series of advertisements appearing in rival Norwich newspapers. The first of these advertised the J. & C. Berry edition, but also included the statement:

In the spurious copy of the poll, lately published by Mr. Richard Bacon, Auctioneer, there are upwards of 200 errors of various kinds. Some votes are entirely left out; and in order to

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<sup>25</sup> For example William Gibson, *Jerusalem Destroyed*, (Cambridge, 1781). Daniel Bocking, *Spiritual Hymns, Composed from Various Texts in the Holy Scriptures*, (Chelmsford, [1781], and Richard Baker, *How the Knowledge of Salvation is Attainable*. (London, 1782).

<sup>26</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 20 November 1782.

<sup>27</sup> *The Norwich Directory*, (Norwich: Printed and sold by W. Chase and Co. March 22, 1783), p.8.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Richard Baker, *The Harmony, or Agreement, of the Four Evangelists*, (London: ... for ... J. and C. Berry, Norwich, 1783). *A Discourse Shewing the Beneficial Effects of the Established Religious Worship of England*. (Norwich: ... for J. and C. Berry; ... 1783). *A Discourse Shewing the Beneficial Effects of Virtuous Principles and Industry*, (Norwich: Printed for J. and C. Berry; 1784), or Samuel Parr, *A Discourse on Education and on the Plans Pursued in Charity-Schools*. (Printed for ... J. and C. Berry, Norwich, (1785).

<sup>29</sup> NRO, NCR, Freeman's Books 3 (Register of Admissions, 1752-1818), 17B.

<sup>30</sup> *The Poll for Members of Parliament for the City of Norwich, Taken the 5th day of April, 1784*. (Norwich: ... for J. and C. Berry [1784]), p.32.

<sup>31</sup> NRO, NCR, Land and Window Tax Papers 1710-1797, St John Maddermarket, 23B.

<sup>32</sup> *A Copy from the Original Poll Book for a Member of Parliament for the City of Norwich. .... Taken at Norwich on the 15th and 16th Days of Sept. 1786*. Norwich: printed by J. Crouse and Co. for J. and C. Berry, ....

<sup>33</sup> *A Copy from the Original Poll Book ...15th and 16th Days of Sept. 1786*. (Norwich: ... f or J. and C. Berry).

counterbalance such omissions, the names of as many others, who did not vote at all, are inserted – to make up the number!<sup>34</sup>

Richard Bacon was a former grocer, turned auctioneer, who later became a printer, bookseller, and newspaper proprietor when he went into partnership with William Chase III, the publisher of the *Norwich Mercury*, in 1785.<sup>35</sup> Thus John Berry's advertisement in the *Norfolk Chronicle* was immediately followed by a second advertisement for the rival publication,<sup>36</sup> which included the note: 'For an answer to Mr. John Berry's last animadversions on the above poll – see *Norwich Mercury* of this day.' The answer in question appeared immediately following an advertisement for the Bacon/Chase edition in Chase's own newspaper:

Mr. John Berry having *at length* produced his *immaculate* Poll, the Proprietors of the *above* request the favor of the impartial (who may think it worth their while) to make a comparison between the two publications, when they doubt not, their's (sic) will be found to be *superior* to Mr. Berry's in *many respects*, and inferior in *none*; In point of arrangement it will surely be allowed that the *strict* alphabetical order adopted in the *above*, both as to the parties and names, is, by far a more *useful* and *convenient* method than that of arranging the parishes indiscriminately under the respective wards to which they belong.

Mr. Berry in his animadversions on the *above* Poll has alluded continually to a publication by *Mr. Richard Bacon, Auctioneer*. But Mr. Bacon, having never *individually*, published a Poll, he begs leave to suggest that the invidious comparison which Mr. Berry has been at pains to make between his own publication and Mr. Bacon's must turn for its object, not the *above* Poll but some of Mr. Bacon's Catalogues of Household Furniture (those being the only publications of his to which his name singly is affixed); though it is surely a very pitiful attempt in Mr. Berry to endeavor, to prejudice the public against Mr. Bacon's Catalogues; but Mr. Bacon contends that, even in such a comparison, his publications have abundantly the superiority. However, whether Mr. Berry alludes to a Catalogue of Mr. Bacon's, or to the Poll published by Chase & Co. in his random statement of 200 errors, which might e'en as well have been 2000, he certainly did not recollect, when he wrote the advertisement, in what estimation his *veracity* is held by the public, and that they would have taken *his word* as soon for one as the other.

Mr. Berry has had the effrontery to assert that the *above* Poll is an inaccurate catchpenny publication, whereby he impudently means to deceive the public into an expectation that his own would be exempt from such imputations; but if either of the publications in question ought to be branded with the term *catchpenny*, the public will doubtless fix it upon that which, after so much indecent vaunting in its favour, comes forth upon an inferior paper, at a higher price & abounding in errors. Indeed there is one kind of superiority which Chase & Co. cannot but allow to Mr. Berry's poll over their's, and that is a superiority both in the *number* and *nature* of the errors; for, not to dwell on the common mistakes, such as wrong *christian* or *fore names*, and wrong *places of abode* (a *few* of which may be found in the table of errata - at the end of the book) and even wrong *votes*; it cannot escape notice that the columns for the total number or votes in *each* parish at the late election, and at that in 1784, are left .....<sup>37</sup>, but what is most remarkable at all, Mr. Berry, in his attempts to correct the mistakes of his ill-fated publication, has, with almost unexampled carelessness, imparted a fruitless favor on his readers; for, in his table of errata, he refers them to, "Day Henry, St. Swithin's", and to "Taylor John, St. Peter's of Mancroft", but if they take the trouble to turn to those parishes, they will have the mortification not to

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<sup>34</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 26 October 1786.

<sup>35</sup> For Bacon's career, see Rex Stedman, 'Vox Populi: the Norfolk Newspaper Press 1760-1900', (Library Association FLA thesis, 1971), pp. 83-91.

<sup>36</sup> *The Poll for a Member of Parliament for the City of Norwich*, (Norwich: printed and sold by Chase and Co. in the Cockey-Lane, [1786]).

<sup>37</sup> The microfilm in the Norwich Library is damaged at this point so there are several words that are illegible.

find *any such persons*, nor even persons of those *surnames*, although his readers should be good-natured enough to give him credit for mistaking the *christian-names*. From such gross blunders as these it is obvious with what *fidelity* Mr. Berry has fulfilled his engagements with his public.

Uninteresting to the public as must be a controversy of this kind between insignificant printers and an equally insignificant Bookseller, they beg leave to notice but one more instance of Mr. Berry's palpable, and, as it should seem, premeditated *fallibility*; - At the bottom of his last advertisement he thought proper to say that *his* Poll would not be *hawked* about, but would be sold by Booksellers *only*; although he had, at that very time actually engaged the persons who had been employed by Chase & Co. to distribute their's to *hawk his* about; and in which office they have been and are still engaged; and therefore it is thought proper to warn the public against being imposed upon by SUCH AN INACCURATE CATCHPENNY PUBLICATION.<sup>38</sup>

This onslaught against John Berry may have had its desired effect. A further ten poll books were sold in the city between 1787 and 1800, but on each occasion the Berry family left it to others to publish them.

After a successful career John Berry [I] died, at the age of 42, in July 1789 and the management of the business appears to have been taken over by his brother Christopher although the ownership may also have included John's two teenage sons.<sup>39</sup>

### **Christopher Berry & Co. (1789-1795)**

There had been a steady stream of small local publications during the 1780s in which members of the Berry family were identified in the imprints - either as distributors or else as publishers. Trading conditions became more difficult during the early 1790s, or perhaps Christopher [II] took less interest in this side of the business than his elder brother. Thus only two such publications are known during the six years that he was solely responsible for the business. The first of these was a 24 page pamphlet on suicide dating from around 1790 'printed for C. Berry and Co.' (presumably, the '& Co.' referred to the two sons of John Berry, (Christopher [III] and John [II])). The second publication was a sermon preached before the Mayor and Corporation Norwich in 1793, in which the 'Berry's' (sic) are named as one among eight local distributors.<sup>40</sup> The firm rather concentrated on organising regular catalogue sales of second-hand books during the early 1790s, culminating in one listing 30,000 titles in March 1794.<sup>41</sup> This would have been a very large sale for a provincial bookseller at this time and appears to reflect the pinnacle of prosperity for the business. By this date the business owned the freehold of three adjacent retail premises at 11-13 Dove Lane and his nephew (Christopher [III]) also owned an adjoining house in Pottergate-street.<sup>42</sup> Christopher's name is also found on a poll for a Norfolk coroner in 1795, where he was described as a freeholder, living in Norwich with property in Tharston, Norfolk.<sup>43</sup>

The volume of the *Universal British Directory* covering Norwich, published 16<sup>th</sup> July 1794, recorded only Christopher's name attached to the business, but for the first time described it as both a bookseller and a printer.<sup>44</sup> No previous members of the family had practised the latter trade and

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<sup>38</sup> *Norwich Mercury*, 26 October 1786.

<sup>39</sup> *Norwich Mercury*, 18 July 1789.

<sup>40</sup> G. S., *Short Expostulations and Thoughts on Suicide*, (Norwich: printed for C. Berry and Co. ..., [1790?], and Robert Potter, *A Sermon Preached before the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Norwich, and the Corporation, in the Cathedral, on Friday, April 19, 1793*, (Printed .. by Crouse and Stevenson, and sold by ... Berry's, Norwich ..., 1793).

<sup>41</sup> Advertised in the *Norwich Mercury*, 8 March 1794.

<sup>42</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 2 May, 1812.

<sup>43</sup> *The Poll for Electing a Coroner for the County of Norfolk, Occasioned by the Resignation of Mr. Francis Munholl ... Taken the eighth of July, 1795*, ...(Norwich: printed and sold by J. March: and may be had of Robberds, Norwich, and Bush, Yarmouth, 1795), p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Ian Maxted, *Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History*; 20 'The British Nook Trades 1784-1811: a Tabulation of National Directories', <http://bookhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2009/04/britain-1784-1811-n-o.html> .

no examples of their printing from this period appear to have survived. Nevertheless, events that were to take place in the following decade indicate that this may have been an accurate description.

### **Berry & Rochester (1795-1809)**

*An appendix to C. Berry & Co.'s catalogue, for the year 1794; comprehending several parcels of curious and rare books*, was advertised in June 1795, listing a further 2,000 volumes acquired over the previous year.<sup>45</sup> However, the newspaper advertisement also announced that Christopher [II] had gone into partnership with another bookseller, Robert Rochester, and their address was now given as 11 Dove Lane. The new company carried on largely as before, acting as the distributors for at least four locally published works between 1797 and 1806, and as the joint publisher of another sermon by Robert Potter in 1803.<sup>46</sup> The business continued to be principally that of a second-hand bookseller issuing sale catalogues in 1798, 1799, 1802 and 1805.<sup>47</sup> The partnership was also recorded in the second Norwich directory, published by Thomas Peck in 1802, described as a bookseller and stationer of 11 Dove-Lane.<sup>48</sup> The printing operation now seems to have been separated from the main business and taken over by John Berry's two sons, Christopher [III] and John [II].<sup>49</sup>

As James Raven notes, eighteenth and nineteenth century booksellers were peculiarly vulnerable to failure, 'because they were often working with tight margins and reliant on extended credit'.<sup>50</sup> This was equally true in the provinces as it was in London and was particularly so during the difficult trading conditions surrounding the Napoleonic Wars. Referring to the fifty years prior to the 'great slump' of 1826, Raven notes 'failures of book trade firms had been frequent and many resulted from the greater risks in years of growth and confidence'.<sup>51</sup> Note has already been made of Jonathan Glead's bankruptcy in 1762, but during the 1790s and 1800s there was a string of book trade bankruptcies in Norfolk beginning with Robert Cordran, of Yarmouth (formerly an apprentice of the elder Christopher Berry) in 1794; Richard Marshall, of King's Lynn in 1799 and John Parslee, of Holt, in 1802.<sup>52</sup> Berry and Rochester eventually appear to have followed the same path in May 1809 as is clear from a newspaper notice.

WHEREAS a commission of bankrupt is awarded and issued forth against CHRISTOPHER BERRY the elder, and ROBERT ROCHESTER of the city of Norwich, book, stationers, dealers, chapmen, and partners, and they being declared bankrupts, are hereby required to

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<sup>45</sup> *Norwich Mercury*, 13 June 1795, and *An Appendix to C. Berry & Co.'s Catalogue, for the Year 1794*; (Norwich: Printed by Crouse, Stevenson and Matchett, 1795).

<sup>46</sup> *The Commentary of Hierocles upon the Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans*, (Norwich: J. Payne. To be had of the author, at Mr. Rix's, and of Messrs. Berry and Rochester. ... 1797, Archibald Brice, *Scriptural Facts and Annotations on the Divinity of the Messiah*, (Bungay C. Brightly, and sold by F. and C. Rivington [and] W. Miller London: Berry & Rochester; Norwich, 1799). *Four Sermons on Job X.2. ... By I. Watts, D.D.*, (Bungay printed and sold by C. Brightly; sold also by Messrs. T. Conder, Bucklersbury; and W. Button, London; Collis and Dash, Kettering, Northamptonshire; Berry and Rochester, and Annis, Norwich 1799), Edmund Bartell *Observations upon the Town of Cromer ... as a Watering Place*, (Printed for J. Taylor, at the Architectural Library, 59, High Holborn; sold by Berry and Rochester, booksellers, Norwich j and Mr. Leake, at Cromer. 1806), and Robert Potter, *A Sermon for the First Day of June 1802, being the Day Appointed for a General Thanksgiving for Peace*, (Norwich: Stevenson and Matchett, ... for Berry and Rochester, ... 1802),

<sup>47</sup> See Fawcett, 'Eighteenth-Century Norfolk Booksellers: a Survey and Register,' p.13, and *A Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books ... by Berry and Rochester ...* (Norwich: J. Payne, 1802) and *A Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books Purchased since 1803 by Berry and Rochester ...* (Norwich: J. Payne, 1805).

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Peck, *The Norwich Directory*; (Norwich: Printed and sold by J. Payne, bookseller, 22, Market-Place. [1802]), p.4.

<sup>49</sup> The printing office was later described as being in an attic of a house occupied by Christopher Berry Jnr, fronting Pottergate-street, *Norfolk Chronicle*, 2 May, 1812.

<sup>50</sup> James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English book trade 1450-1850*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p.294.

<sup>51</sup> Raven, *The Business of Books*, p.295.

<sup>52</sup> Ian Maxted, 'Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History; 4, The British book trades, 1731-1806: a Checklist of Bankrupts,' <http://bookhistory.blogspot.co.uk/2007/01/bankrupts.html>



surrender themselves to the Commissioners in the said commission named, or the major part of them, on the thirteenth May instant, the seventh day of June next, and the first day of July next, at the hour of four o'clock in the afternoon of each of the said days, at the house of William Leach, commonly called or known by the sign of the King's Head, situate in the Market-place of the city of Norwich, and make a full discovery and disclosure of their estate and effects; when and where the creditors are to come prepared to prove their debts, and at the second sitting to choose assignees, and at the last sitting the said bankrupts are required to finish their examination and the creditors are to assent to or dissent from the allowance of their certificates. All persons indebted to the said bankrupts, or who have any of the effects, are not to pay or deliver the same except to whom the Commissioners shall appoint, but to give notice to Messrs. Simpson and Rackham, attornies, in Norwich, or to Messrs. Windus, Son, and Holtaway, attornies, Chancery-lane, London.”<sup>53</sup>

The bankruptcy process involved holding a public meeting of the creditors during which the partners were required to divulge all of their assets so that they could be sold to pay off a proportion of their debts. If they failed to do so, or sought to hide them in any way, they were committing a capital offence.<sup>54</sup> If the bankrupt complied with the terms of the act, and four fifths of the creditors agreed, they could be discharged from the state of bankruptcy, with all remaining debts **owing** expunged.<sup>55</sup> Typically this might take twelve months before the bankrupt could start up in business again. However, during this discovery process it became apparent that Christopher Senior, did not hold the freehold of their premises in Dove Lane. The exact details are not known but during the previous February (perhaps foreseeing his imminent failure) he had transferred to his nephew, Christopher Junior, ‘his Share and Interest of and in certain Freehold Premises situate and being in the parish of St John Maddermarket.’ A further creditors’ meeting was therefore held on 4 November to decide whether to seek to have these transactions set aside by the courts.<sup>56</sup> As a result of this meeting, the creditors of Berry and Rochester began proceedings claiming that the elder Christopher held ‘a moiety [half share] of certain messuages, grounds and hereditaments belonging to the said Christopher the younger.’<sup>57</sup> Inevitably these proceedings took time to settle but in the meanwhile the *Morning Chronicle* in London announced a three day sale of the ‘the entire stock of Messrs. Berry and Rochester, booksellers of the City of Norwich, bankrupts.’<sup>58</sup> It would be a further three and a half years before Berry and Rochester were eventually released from their bankruptcy.<sup>59</sup> Nothing more is known of the fate of Christopher Berry [III**check**] or of Robert Rochester, other than the record of their deaths. Rochester died May 1827, and Christopher died, aged 79, in January 1828, a pauper in the Great Hospital in Norwich.<sup>60</sup>

### **Christopher Berry [III] and John Berry [II] (1809-1810)**

Christopher Berry [III] later known as Christopher Berry Jnr first appears on the 1799 Norwich poll as a bookseller living in St John Maddermarket parish, although the business at this time was operated by Berry and Rochester.<sup>61</sup> No trade is given for him on the 1806 poll, where he is

<sup>53</sup> *The Norfolk Chronicle*, 20 May, 1809.

<sup>54</sup> See Emily Kadens, ‘The Last Bankrupt Hanged: Balancing Incentives in the Development of Bankruptcy Law,’ *Duke Law Journal*, 59 (7) 2010, 1229-1318.

<sup>55</sup> See Ann M Carlos, Luis Castro Penarrieta, and Edward Kosack, ‘Bankruptcy in Early Modern England: Discharge and Debtor Rights,’ p.9. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/seminars/ModernAndComparative/papers2012-13/Conformity-and-the-Certificate-of-Discharge-AC-28-12-2012.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> *The London Gazette*, 21 October 1809 Issue:16308, p. 1677.

<sup>57</sup> *The London Gazette*, 21 January 1812 Issue:16565, p. 153-4.

<sup>58</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 30 November 1809.

<sup>59</sup> *The London Gazette*, 15 June 1813. Issue: 16741, p. 1189.

<sup>60</sup> Ancestry.com FHL Film Number:1657181 item 20-33 p 79, and NRO, Norfolk Bishop's Transcripts, 1685-1941, Archdeaonry of Norwich, Burials in the parish of St Helen's, 1828.

<sup>61</sup> *The Poll for a Member of Parliament for the City and County of Norwich, Taken the Twenty-Seventh of May, 1799. ... Candidates. John Frere, ... Robert Fellowes, ...* (Norwich, Bacon, printer, 1799). p. 16.

designated as a freeholder, and as a 'gent' in that of 1807.<sup>62</sup> (John Berry's younger son, John II (b.1786) was too young to take any part in these elections.)

The two brothers had not been in a formal partnership with their uncle and Robert Rochester and so were not directly affected by the bankruptcy although there would be a continuing dispute over the ownership of the business premises. In the same newspaper as their uncle's bankruptcy was announced, they used the opportunity advertise their own business in some nearby premises, although it was important for them to dissociate themselves with their uncle's bankrupt business. For this reason Christopher [III] began to refer to himself as Christopher Berry, Jun.

Christopher Berry, Jun. & John Berry, sons of the late John Berry being totally unconnected with the firm of Berry and Rochester, intend to continue the trades of printing, bookselling, stationary, and binding, at their premises near the Dove-Lane, Norwich, for which they solicit the favours of all friends and of the public in general, assuring them, that all orders will be executed with the greatest attention and dispatch, and most gratefully acknowledged.<sup>63</sup>

However, unlike their father and uncle before them, these two brothers found it difficult to get along with one another and their partnership lasted only a few months before it was dissolved by mutual consent the following January and they each went their separate ways.<sup>64</sup>

### **Christopher Berry Jnr (1810-1831)**

Christopher Berry [III] married Mary Eastaugh in 1807, the same year that he was described as 'gent' on the Norwich poll.<sup>65</sup> He was thirty-four years old and living in some luxury at 110 Pottergate-street (now known as Pottergate) on the corner with Dove Lane, close to the business premises of Berry and Rochester.<sup>66</sup> Over the next twelve years the couple had nine children (eight of whom survived infancy), beginning with Mary in April 1808 and Christopher Rochester Berry in May 1809.<sup>67</sup>

Following the break-up of his partnership with his brother in January 1810, whilst the issue of the ownership of Nos. 11-13 Dove-Lane was still being resolved, Christopher Jnr was able to come to terms with the creditors of Berry and Rochester and begin trading there once more.

Christopher Berry, jun. printer, bookseller, stationer, and bookbinder, at the old established shop, Dove-lane, Norwich, (late Berry & Rochester), impressed with the most lively sense of gratitude for the liberal support he has experienced from his friends and those of B and R since he took the concern on himself in the hopes of their being reinstated in it, returns his most grateful thanks, and assures them that no exertion on his part shall be wanting in him for its accomplishment. – He further solicits their support, promising that their orders shall receive the strictest attention, and be executed on the most reasonable terms.

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<sup>62</sup> *The Poll for members of Parliament, for the City and County of Norwich, Taken the Third and Fourth of November, 1806*, (Norwich: Printed and sold by Stevenson and Matchett; sold also by all booksellers and the distributors of the *Norfolk chronicle*. [1806]), and *The Poll for Members of Parliament, for the City and County of Norwich, Taken the Fourth day of May, 1807*, (Norwich: Stevenson and Matchett 1807).

<sup>63</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 20 May, 1809.

<sup>64</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 27 January, 1810.

<sup>65</sup> Christopher, son of John and Ann Berry was baptised 23 March 1773 (St John Maddermarket Baptisms). Christopher Berry married Mary Eastaugh 9 July 1807 (NRO St Peter Mancroft marriage register).

<sup>66</sup> The furnishings of their house were described in some detail in an advertisement in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, 24 January 1812.

<sup>67</sup> The names and dates of the Berry children are as follows: Mary, baptised 24 April 1808; Christopher Rochester, baptised 28 May 1809; Maria, baptised 30 August 1810; John, baptised 12 August 1811; Louisa, baptised 17 January 1813; Augustus, baptised 17 July 1814, Sarah, baptised: 2 June 1816, Edward, baptised 7 September 1817, and Eliza Taylor Berry, baptised 9 July 1819 ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)).

NB The utmost value given for libraries or parcels, of books, in ready money, and books exchanged on the fairest terms. Wanted, a journeyman printer; a steady man will meet with constant employ. Letters to be post-paid.<sup>68</sup>

He seems to have been a more ambitious local publisher than his father or uncle had been. In addition to the usual diet of execution broadsides, play-bills and other small publications of a local nature,<sup>69</sup> he printed and published two more substantial works during 1810 and 1811. The first of these was *A concise history and directory of the city of Norwich for 1811*, which he also seems to have compiled.<sup>70</sup> This was the third directory to be published for Norwich. The first two, (by William Chase & Co. in 1783/4 and by Thomas Peck in 1802/3) had been successful publications each of which warranted the issue of a supplement or a revised edition the year after publication.<sup>71</sup> Thus a third directory would appear equally likely to succeed.

The ‘concise history’ element of this work was described as ‘entirely written and compiled for the present purpose’ although inevitably it was largely drawn from several similar works published on the subject during the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless the editor required additional information to update the lists of Mayors, Members of Parliament. He also provided information about ‘many charitable and public institutions ...which are not noticed elsewhere’. He admitted that the task of ‘obtaining the address of so large a population,’ proved to be far more taxing than the author had anticipated, ‘or else he would have been deterred from such an undertaking.’<sup>73</sup> The title page states that the work was ‘embellished by a plan of the city,’ although this is missing in the only copy known to have survived. Most unusually, for such a publication, the names were given in an eccentric order, arranged alphabetically by the first letter, and then according to the first vowel. Thus Blake and Brady appear before Bell or Berry. The reason why he chose this peculiar arrangement is not given but it was clearly done deliberately since it is noted in the preface.

The second substantial publication from this period was the *Memoirs of the Life, Character, Opinions, and Writings of that Learned and Eccentric Man, the Late John Fransham, of Norwich*, written by William Saint. Fransham was a freethinker and a polytheist writer and his biography extends to 158 pages which was a substantial work from a provincial press.<sup>74</sup> The imprint merely states that it was printed by Christopher Berry Jnr in 1811, but the preface, dated 3 October 1811, speaks of the ‘application of one bookseller, and the advice of another, to publish a more extended account,’ suggesting that Berry may also have been involved in financing the publication as well.

Together, these two relatively expensive publications appear to have over-extended Christopher Jnr as the following notice appeared in the press within one month of the publication of the above.

WHEREAS, a Commission of Bankrupt, is awarded and issued forth against  
CHRISTOPHER BERRY, the younger, of the city of Norwich, bookseller, printer, stationer,  
dealer and chapman, and he being declared a Bankrupt, is hereby required to surrender  
himself to the Commissioners in the said Commission named, or the major part of them, on

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<sup>68</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 5 May 1810. The journeyman printer appointed as a result of this advertisement appears to have been William Cooke Stafford, who features later in the story.

<sup>69</sup> *The Last Dying Speeches, and Confessions, and the Execution of Daniel McCrory, who was Executed at Carlisle on the 25th of September, and of Wm. Grierson, who was Executed at Appleby on the 28th of the Same Month*. (Norwich: C. Berry, printer, 1810), *Tables of Money, Weights, and Measures: Compiled for the Use of Schools* (Norwich: Printed by and for C. Berry, 1810), *A List of the Towns, Villages, &c. in Norfolk ...*: (Norwich: C. Berry, 1811).

<sup>70</sup> *A Concise History and Directory of the City of Norwich for 1811*, (Norwich: Printed by and for C. Berry, jun. ..., 1810).

<sup>71</sup> *The Norwich Directory*, (Norwich: Printed and sold by W. Chase and Co., 1783); *Appendix to the Norwich directory, January 3, 1784* ((Norwich: W. Chase and Co., 1784); Thomas Peck, *The Norwich Directory*; (Norwich: Printed and sold by J. Payne, bookseller, 22, Market-Place. [1802]), with another edition c. 1803.

<sup>72</sup> *A Concise History and Directory of the City of Norwich for 1811*, ‘Editor’s address to the public,’ p.[iii].

<sup>73</sup> ‘Editor’s address to the public,’ p.[iii].

<sup>74</sup> William Saint, *Memoirs of the Life, Character, Opinions, and Writings of that Learned and Eccentric Man, the Late John Fransham, of Norwich*, (Norwich: printed by C. Berry, Jnr., 1811).

the nineteenth day of November instant, and on the tenth and twenty-eighth days of December next, at the hour of four o'clock in the afternoon of each of the said days, at the house of William Leach, known by the sign of the King's Head, in the parish of Saint Peter Mancroft, in the said city of Norwich; and make a full discovery and disclosure of his estate and effects, when and where the creditors are to come prepared to prove their debts, and at the second sitting to choose Assignees, and at the last sitting the said Bankrupt is required to finish his examination, and the creditors to assent or dissent from the allowance of Certificate. All persons indebted to the said Bankrupt, or have any of his effects are not to pay or deliver the same but to whom the Commissioner shall appoint, but to give notice to Messrs. Simpson and Rackham, attornies in Norwich.<sup>75</sup>

At the second public meeting an initial dividend was made: 'creditors who have not already proved their debts are to come prepared to prove the same, or they will be excluded the benefit of the said dividend, and all claims not then proved will be disallowed.'<sup>76</sup> A third notice was published in time for the third meeting requiring Berry's debtors to pay the liquidators.<sup>77</sup> The next step was the enforced sale of the family's personal effects, which took place one month later.

HANDSOME HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, FIXTURES AND EFFECTS  
POTTERGATE-STREET, NORWICH To be SOLD by AUCTION, By JAS. DELAHOY.  
On the Premises as above, Tuesday, the 30th of January, 1812, at Eleven o'clock in the forenoon, (by order of the Assignees of CHRISTOPHER BERRY, printer and bookseller, a bankrupt),

THE neat and genuine HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, &c consisting four-post and other bedsteads, with printed cotton furniture, lined, feather-beds, mattresses, blankets, and bedding, beautiful French drapery window curtains, handsome sofa, on castors, with cotton case and cushions, Brussels add Kidderminster carpets, large mahogany dining table, circular ends, fine wood, ditto celleret sideboard, elegant mahogany card tables, gilt and fancy painted drawing-room, and chamber chairs, pier glasses, burnished frames, china and glass, mahogany parlour and kitchen tables and chairs, and a general assortment useful domestic requisites, the whole of which will be particularized in printed Catalogues, to be ready for delivery on Wednesday, effects may be viewed.—Catalogues may then had on the Premises; and Messrs. Simpson and Rackham, Solicitors under the bankruptcy, St Giles's, Norwich.<sup>78</sup>

The bankruptcy process was undoubtedly complicated because the creditors of Berry and Rochester were still claiming half of the value of the freehold of the Dove Lane business premises. Thus a fourth meeting of the creditors was arranged to 'assent to or dissent from the said Assignees compounding and settling upon such terms as they shall think proper.'<sup>79</sup> After this sale came further sales during the following May to dispose of the various business premises that had been acquired by the family over the previous decades.

EXCELLENT SITUATIONS FOR TRADE. To be SOLD by AUCTION, in LOTS, By Wm. BURT,

At the Dove Tavern, in Saint Lawrence, Norwich, on Monday, the 11th May, precisely at four o'clock in the afternoon, by order the Assignees of CHRISTOPHER BERRY, Bankrupt, A Most valuable Freehold ESTATE, in Norwich, adjoining the Dove-lane, arid within very short distance of the Market-place, consisting of Dwelling-houses and Shops

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<sup>75</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 16 November, 1811.

<sup>76</sup> *The London Gazette*, 14 November 1812 Issue:16668, p. 2313, and *Norfolk Chronicle*, 28 November, 1811.

<sup>77</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 21 December 1811.

<sup>78</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 24 January 1812.

<sup>79</sup> *The London Gazette*, 21 January 1812 Issue: 16565, p. 153.

admirably situated for business, and possessing all the accommodation and conveniences requisite for carrying extensive concerns.

Lot I. Dwelling -house and Shop, the Dove-lane, with a building the yard behind house, now used as a plumbing shop, in occupation of Mr. John Ansell, tenant from year to year, who has for a long time carried on a considerable business a plumber and glazier upon these premises. – To this lot will be added a small piece of ground which did belong to the next lot.

Lot 2. A very desirable dwelling-house, with two capital large shops and a counting room, situated at the South-west corner of the Dove lane, and fronting that lane and Pottergate-street. –This house contains, besides the rooms necessary for the residence of a family, several chambers and atticks which might be converted into warerooms, and suited to the purposes of trade, and was for many years in the occupation of Messrs. Berry and Rochester, booksellers. Under it are large vaulted cellars, which are occupied by Mr Wilnot, as tenant from a year to year. – These premises may easily be divided into smaller occupations, and immediate possession may be had of the house and shops lately held by Berry & Rochester.

Lot 3. A comfortable and convenient Dwelling-house, in good repair, the occupation of Mr. Christopher Berry, fronting Pottergate-street, and adjoining the last lot.—The house consists of two parlours, and another room used as a shop, tea room, good chambers and atticks, (one which attick is used as a printing office) besides a kitchen and cellar, and has a pleasant small garden behind it. —This lot is fitted up handsome style, and is well worth the attention of any small family.

For particulars and conditions of sale apply to Simpson and Rackham, Solicitors, Norwich, at Whose office a ground plan the estate may be seen.<sup>80</sup>

Although the bankruptcy acts then in force were primarily intended to prevent frauds they also provided a number of important safeguards for compliant debtors.<sup>81</sup> For example, the wearing apparel of the debtor and their family could no longer be seized, and an allowance of five percent of the value of their estate (up to £200) was made, so long as creditors received at least 40% of their debts, and there was always the possibility of ultimate discharge for compliant debtors.<sup>82</sup> Thus whilst bankruptcy was both a considerable setback for any tradesman and a humiliating process for their family, it was not necessarily the end of their career. In October 1812, whilst he was still waiting for his discharge, Christopher Berry Jnr was described as a book-binder, living in St. Lawrence's parish.<sup>83</sup> Of all those trades associated with the production and sale of books, 'the poorest were almost certainly the binders,'<sup>84</sup> as it required a minimum of capital. However, once the discharge came through he seems to have had enough to retain a printing press and some types from the ruins of his former career, and he set up in business as a 'jobbing printer'. He became one of a half a dozen or so similar small-scale tradesmen in the city who scratched a living from printing handbills, playbills, broadside ballads, political squibs and the occasional official document in the years before the accession of Queen Victoria. These men operated alongside their far more prosperous colleagues who also undertook regular newspaper and book printing. Thus from April 1813 payments to Christopher for miscellaneous printing jobs begin to appear in local

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<sup>80</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 2 May, 1812.

<sup>81</sup> *An Act to Prevent Frauds Frequently Committed by Bankrupts*, 4&5 Anne c 4 and 6 Anne c 7.

<sup>82</sup> See Carlos, Penarrieta, and Kosack, 'Bankruptcy in Early Modern England,' p.9.

<sup>83</sup> *The Poll for Members of Parliament Taken for the City and County of Norwich, Taken the Seventh and Eighth of October, 1812...*, (Norwich: printed and sold by Stevenson, Matchett and Stevenson [1812]).

<sup>84</sup> Raven, *The Business of Books*, p. 137.

records,<sup>85</sup> and in the June he advertised, price one shilling, *A Little Irregular Ode, Addressed to the Decayed Members of the Bankrupt Club*, which was a little ironic given his present situation.<sup>86</sup>

The following October the family moved again into rented premises at 16 St Giles Broad Street where they also took in lodgers. Christopher sought to portray this setback in the best possible light in a newspaper advertisement.

CHRISTOPHER BERRY, Jun. IMPRESSED with gratitude for the very liberal encouragement he has met with, returns his sincere thanks to his Friends, and respectfully informs them and the Public in general, he is removed from No. 110. Pottergate-street to No. 16, St. Giles's Broad-street, nearly opposite the Stamp Office, where all orders for PRINTING or BOOK-BINDING will be thankfully received and speedily executed. Genteel Apartments to Let, furnished, from two to six rooms, with the accommodation of a huge garden."<sup>87</sup>

During the year 1814 Christopher undertook the printing of a number of local publications, seemingly on behalf of their authors. These included two items by George Beaumont, the minister of the Ebenezer's Chapel in Ber Street, Norwich: *The Breast-Plate* and *Fixed stars: or, An Analyzation and Refutation of Astrology*, all of which were reasonably well printed for a piece of contemporary provincial printing.<sup>88</sup> No further book printing is known during the years 1815 and 1816, although it is clear from the record of official payments that he continued in business as a jobbing printer.

A playbill dating from May 1815 (in the author's possession) shows that his work had by then suffered a decline in the standards of his printing: it is poorly inked, the impression was smudged, and the 'e' in the printer's own name was upside down. He was still living in St Giles' parish at this time and was also selling theatre tickets as a side line.<sup>89</sup> However, by May 1817 he had moved to less salubrious premises at Ewen's Court. St Lawrence's parish, and his skills as a printer had not markedly improved, as is apparent from twelve parts of the *Norwich Election Budget* for May 1817, printed by him.<sup>90</sup> The reason for this decline in printing standards and the way he tried to remedy the situation is explained by an advertisement in the *Norfolk Chronicle* for 12 July 1817.

C. BERRY, Printer, Returns his most grateful acknowledgements to his friends and the public, for their generous patronage, and respectfully informs them, that he has entered into a Partnership with W.C. STAFFORD, (who conducted his Office for several years), and that the business will in future be carried on under the firm of BERRY and STAFFORD, *Letter Press and Copper Plate Printers*, And every article in the above branches shall be executed with the utmost attention to the wishes of their employers, and on liberal terms, at their Office, Ewen's Court, opposite St. Lawrence's Church. Norwich. Pamphlets, Auctioneers' Catalogue and Hand bills, Particulars, Posting Bills, Cards, &c executed on the shortest possible notice.

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<sup>85</sup> NRO, NCR Norwich Incorporated and Union Workhouse Records: Guardian's Court Books. Case 20e/13.

<sup>86</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 19 June 1813. The advertisement also mentions *The Entertaining Miscellany, Being a Selection of Anecdotes and Essays in Prose and Verse*, price 2s. also apparently published by him,. Unfortunately neither title appears to have survived.

<sup>87</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 2 October 1813

<sup>88</sup> George Beaumont *The Breast-Plate: or, a Review of Certain Proceedings at the Hanley Conference, Held in Whitsun-Week, 1814, Relative to Mr. M--t and Others*, (Norwich: printed by C. Berry 1814); and *Fixed stars: or, An Analyzation and Refutation of Astrology ...* (Norwich Printed by C. Berry;..., 1814).

<sup>89</sup> A handbill announcing the abdication and arrest of Buonoparte, dated 26 June 1815, and a notice of a forthcoming auction to be held on 19 June 1816, were both printed by him, and give his address as 'St Giles Broad Street' (Colman Broad-sides Box 17 and 4.)

<sup>90</sup> *No. I (-XII) ... of the Norfolk Election Budget* 2nd ed. (Norwich: C. Berry [1817]: <http://books.google.com/books?vid=BL:A0017924277>



Several playbills printed by Berry & Stafford, dating from August and September 1817 ~~exist~~ **survive** in the Colman Collection of broadsides in Norwich, and also one 63 page political pamphlet with the imprint of Stafford and Berry.<sup>91</sup> However, Christopher was clearly a difficult partner for anyone to get on with, as is apparent from a further notice dated 4 October dissolving their partnership after less than three months.<sup>92</sup>

Christopher's professional decline between 1811 and 1819 seems to have been mirrored in his personal life culminating in the entry of his wife and six youngest surviving children to the Norwich workhouse in September 1819, two months after the birth of their last child.<sup>93</sup> Christopher Jnr. was ordered to pay 20s each week towards their maintenance. Since their father was still working and seemingly able to pay this sum indicates that he had probably abandoned them to their fate. Their baby daughter Eliza died in January 1820, followed by Augustus in July 1823, and Edward in April 1824, seemingly as a result of the appalling conditions in the local workhouse.<sup>94</sup> In each case the cost of maintenance payable by Christopher was reduced as a result.

Between 1814 and 1828 Christopher was regularly paid for official printing ~~but no surviving works are known printed by him dated between 1818 and 1826,~~ **but only a few undateable examples survive from this period. For example, one political handbill, gives his address as 'Old Hay Market, Norwich.'**<sup>95</sup> In the August of ~~the latter year~~ **1826 there is** an advertisement for a performance by the acrobat Carlo Gram Villecrop – 'the celebrated Swiss Mountain Flyer' **which** shows that he was then working from an address in Wounded Heart Lane in St Stephen's parish. Other small publications ~~dating~~ from 1827 included a satirical poem, and a slip song, both attacking the editor of the *Norwich Theatrical Observer*.<sup>96</sup> **Two political broadsides from July 1830 show him in Chettleburgh's Court, Rampant Horse Street, St. Stephen's parish at this time.**<sup>97</sup> He is last known for printing an undated parody on [Thomas Hood's] poem, *Mary's ghost*, in which the names of Norwich localities and medical personalities have been substituted for those in the original.<sup>98</sup>

After an affluent childhood and ambitious start to his career, the greater part of his working life appears to have been a failure. Christopher Berry, aged 56, died suddenly and was buried 20th June 1831, in the churchyard of St Giles.<sup>99</sup>

### **John Berry (1810-1841)**

John Berry [II] married Susanna Mayes of Swainsthorpe, Norfolk, in 1808 and they had a son, Robert Rochester Berry, who was baptised 24 February 1809 in St Giles parish. Nothing more is known of his family. Following his break with his brother, in January 1810, he set up on his own account as a printer and stationer in the Upper Market Place, but he was clearly lacking in the

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<sup>91</sup> George Burgess, *A Letter to T.W. Coke Esq., M.P. on the Tendency of Certain Speeches Delivered at the County Meeting, in the Shire-Hall Norwich, on Saturday April 5, 1817*, (Norwich: Stafford and Berry, 1817).

<sup>92</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 4 October 1817.

<sup>93</sup> 7 September 1819 – 'Ordered that Mary, the wife of Christopher Berry the younger and six of her children be received into the workhouse and that the said Christopher Berry do pay 20s weekly to Mr Stannard towards their maintenance on the Saturday in each week to commence on Saturday next. And if he fail therein ordered that the Mayor be requested to issue his warrant for the apprehension of the said Christopher Berry', NRO NCR Incorporated and Union Workhouse Records: Guardian's Court Books Ref. Case 20e/13.

<sup>94</sup> NRO, St Giles burial register.

<sup>95</sup> *Toll Loll's Gang, or the radical procession. Colman Broadsides box 25.*

<sup>96</sup> Charles John Smyth, (Philo Thespis) *A Quid Pro Quo: or, the Doctor and his Conclave*, (Norwich printed by C. Berry 1827), and *The Following Acrostic has been Refused Admission by the Impartial Editor of the Observer*. (C. Berry, printer, Norwich [1827]).

<sup>97</sup> *To the freemen of Norwich, and 'Blue and White Theatre, Large Duck Yard, Colman Broadsides Boxes 3 & 26.*

<sup>98</sup> *A Parody on 'Mary's ghost'; or, the Doctors and Body-Snatchers. A Pathetic Tale, with Numerous Additions.* (Norwich: C. Berry). The original poem was published in 1827.

<sup>99</sup> NRO, St Giles Burial Register There was formerly a monument to him in the churchyard – see Peter Eade, *Some Account of the Parish of St. Giles, Norwich* (Norwich: Jarrold .1906), p.197.

necessary capital for such a business and within a year he too had gone bankrupt.<sup>100</sup> It may not have been a serious failure, or perhaps he was able to come to some arrangement with his creditors as this process was soon afterwards listed as having been ‘superseded’ indicating that the proceedings had been suspended.<sup>101</sup> The following July the Commissioners dealing with his bankruptcy confirmed that he had ‘conformed himself according to the several Acts of Parliament dealing with Bankrupts’ and recommended his discharge.<sup>102</sup>

He may then have sought to make his living elsewhere in Norfolk since there is a reference ‘John Berry, late of Norwich, bookseller,’ as having borrowed £200 from a local charity against a mortgage on an estate at Aylsham, Norfolk at this time.<sup>103</sup> However, by 1817, he was back in the city of his birth, once again working as a jobbing printer in Bethel Street.<sup>104</sup> Between 1819 and 1823 his name also appears in official records for payments for printing, and he seems to have been a competitor of his elder brother for this type of work.<sup>105</sup>

Local printers were provided with plenty of work by local elections, especially when they were fiercely fought. It was not just in printing accounts of poll-books themselves (which usually tend to survive), but a range of more ephemeral publications, such as posters, the election addresses of the candidates and a steady stream of satirical ‘squibs’ attacking the rivals issued throughout the campaign. These are far less likely to survive as individual items, but sometimes they were collected together and published by one side or another. Thus the *Norwich Election Budget, ... Containing a Selection of All the Addresses Squibs, & c &c. Published during the Contest between Messrs. Smith & Gurney - and Mr. Harbord, June the 17th, 1818*, was issued in four parts during 1818, printed by John Berry. John’s interest in politics also caused him to print and publish two contributions to the debates on Parliamentary reform that were taking place in the city during the 1820s. He first published *An Abridgment of the Rev. Mr. Burges's Reflections on the Nature and Tendency of the Present Spirit of the Times* in 1820,<sup>106</sup> followed by an anonymous *Plain Narrative of Facts*, which may well have also been written as well printed and sold by him in 1821.<sup>107</sup> However these sixty page pamphlets were just two among dozens of others at the time and appear to have had minimal impact. **In July 1823 he printed a broadside listing the sentences imposed on the prisoners tried at Norwich Assizes, and his address was then given as ‘near the Duke’s Palace, Norwich.’<sup>108</sup>**

The remainder of John Berry’s rather sad career as a minor jobbing printer in Norwich is set out in the records of the Court for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors, as reported in the *London Gazette*.<sup>109</sup> He was in partnership with a James Lemmon at the ‘corner of Post-Office Street,’ **St John Maddermarket parish**, but this was dissolved 7 December 1837.<sup>110</sup> Thereafter he was described as

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<sup>100</sup> See Christopher Berry, *A Concise History and Directory of the City of Norwich for 1811*, (Norwich: C. Berry, 1810) and The National Archives, Registers of Commissions of bankruptcy 1810 -1811, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1811. B 4/30. John’s bankruptcy was also reported in *The Bury and Norwich Post*, 6 February 1811.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Bankruptcy superseded,’ *The Examiner* 162 (3 February 1811).

<sup>102</sup> *The London Gazette*, 20 July 1811 Issue:16506, p.1376.

<sup>103</sup> Zachary Clark, *An Account of the Different Charities Belonging to the Poor of the County of .Norfolk*, (Bury St. Edmund’s: Gedge and Barker, 1811), p.165.

<sup>104</sup> John Berry, printed *Observations upon the Rev. G. Burges's Letter to T.W. Coke, Esq.* (Norwich: Printed for and sold by J. Stacy ; and B. Reynolds,), 1817, and George Burges, *An Abridgment of the Rev. Mr. Burges's Reflections on the Nature and Tendency of the Present Spirit of the Times* (Norwich: Printed and sold by John Berry, 1820). His address appears on a play bill for 22<sup>nd</sup> May [1820] in the Norwich Library

<sup>105</sup> **NRO**, NCR Incorporated and Union Workhouse Records: Guardian’s Court Books Ref. Case 20e/14.

<sup>106</sup> *An Abridgment of the Rev. Mr. Burges's Reflections on the Nature and Tendency of the Present Spirit of the Times*. (Norwich: Printed and sold by John Berry: sold also by Stevenson and Co. J. Parsons, J. Stacy, G. Kitton, and W. Woodrow Norwich; Hatchard and Son, London: Deighton, Cambridge, & all other booksellers, 1820).

<sup>107</sup> John Berry, *A Plain Narrative of Facts*, (Norwich: John Berry, 1821).

<sup>108</sup> **Colman Broadside box 12.**

<sup>109</sup> *The London Gazette*, 23 October 1840 Issue:19907, p. 2351.

<sup>110</sup> *The London Gazette*, 12 December 1837 Issue:19568, p. 3266. **James Lemon or Lemmon [whose name is also given in some records as Lannon] was previously a jobbing printer in St Michael’s Coslany parish. There is one surviving**



being 'of St Andrew's Broad Street, printer on his own account,' and 'late of Red Lion-street, St Stephen, Printer and Publican'. On 14 October 1840 he was in the gaol of the City of Norwich, now described as a journeyman-printer.<sup>111</sup> He was ordered to be brought before the court on 16 November when he was presumably released from custody. He died less than seven weeks later, aged 54 and was buried in St Giles' churchyard 10 January 1841.

### **Christopher Rochester Berry (1831-1838) and Edward Berry (1845-1908)**

Only two of Christopher Jnr's children remained out of the workhouse, when their mother entered together with their six young siblings in September 1819. These were his eldest daughter, Mary, aged 11, and his eldest son, Christopher Rochester Berry, aged 10. Presumably they assisted their father for several years, but Christopher Rochester later briefly entered into partnership with Elwin Owen Lloyd as the firm of 'Lloyd and Berry, printers'. This partnership was dissolved 14 December 1831, and he appears to have continued on his own.<sup>112</sup> ~~In the 1837 Register of Electors he was shown to be living in Pottergate street.~~<sup>113</sup>

Like his father and his uncle, Christopher Rochester appears to have taken an active interest in local politics as a determined opponent of the Parliamentary Reforms then taking place. During the years 1835 and 1836 an occasional illustrated anti-Whig political satirical periodical publication appeared in the city under the title *Municipal characters*, and with part titles such as. 'Glorious working of the Whigs'. These titles were printed by a new firm of Davy & Berry, printers, who gave their address as 'Albion Office, opposite Cockey Lane, Saint Andrew's Norwich.'<sup>114</sup> Later they operated from 13 Pottergate, near Cockey-Lane.<sup>115</sup> The various parts were well printed on good paper intended to be collected together and a title page was issued. The series was continued for a while as *Snap redivivus, or, a Slap at the Whigs*, but eventually reverted to its original title.

However, this partnership was brought to a premature ended by the death of Christopher Rochester, aged 29, in June 1838. He was buried together with his father in St Giles' churchyard.<sup>116</sup> In July 1849 John Davy the younger, late of Pottergate-street St Andrew, Norwich, Printer, Stationer, Bookbinder and Copper plate printer was brought before the Court for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors. He was then described as 'previously of the same place in partnership with Christopher Rochester Berry, since deceased.'<sup>117</sup>

The final member of the family to work in the book trade was a grandson of Christopher Jnr. whose eldest daughter, Mary, became a staymaker and had four illegitimate children. Her youngest son, Edward, was born in 1845, and is shown on the 1861 census return as an apprentice to a printer. The censuses between 1871 and 1901 show him as a printer's compositor living in Heigham, near Norwich.<sup>118</sup> In the 1891 census his two sons were listed as an Assistant Schoolmaster and a Solicitor's Clerk, and so the family had once again begun to climb the ladder towards middle-class

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notice, apparently relating to the 1837 Norwich election printed by Lemmon and Berry (Colman Broad-sides box 29). From 1838 James Lemmon continued in business alone (*The Tormentor*, Nos.1-5 June 16<sup>th</sup> – August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1838) Colman broadsides boxes 36 & 50.

<sup>111</sup> *The London Gazette*, 16 October 1840 Issue:19905, p. 2299.

<sup>112</sup> *The London Gazette*, 20 December 1831, Issue 18885, p. 2705

<sup>113</sup> FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/2CM5-JRM>: accessed 26 Aug 2014,

<sup>114</sup> The first issue entitled 'Waggeries for the Whigs' Price 1d. was published 28<sup>th</sup> October 1835. 'The glorious working for the Whigs, (January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1836). The last known copy of *Snap Redivivus*, was No. 16 (18 June 1836) , and *Municipal characters* No. 18 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1836 (Colman Broad-sides Boxes 18, 27, and 36). There are also two undated broadsides from this period were printed by them *An extract from the Norwich Mercury*, and *The municipal bear* Colman Broad-sides Boxes 5 & 25.

<sup>115</sup> *Twelfth night characters No.4*, Colman broadsides box 36. In the 1837 Register of Electors he was shown to be living in Pottergate-street (FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/2CM5-JRM>: accessed 26 Aug 2014,)

<sup>116</sup> Norfolk Bishop's Transcripts, 1685-1941", index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/JZ11-ZMZ>: accessed 26 Aug 2014.

<sup>117</sup> *The London Gazette*, 5 July 1849 Issue:19748, p. 1341. White's *Directory of Norfolk* for 1836 identifies Davy and Berry at 13 Pottergate Street, but the 1845 edition lists John Davy, alone, in Magdalen Street.

<sup>118</sup> He died in April 1908.

respectability. Thereafter descendants of the family included a canon of the Church of England, the Mayor of the City of Bath and a food writer/television personality.

The rise and fall of the Berry family is a good illustration of the potential benefits and risks involved in working in the English provincial book trade during the Hanoverian era. The first Christopher and his two sons built up a prosperous and wide ranging business over a sixty year period, but one false move could bring down the whole edifice and condemn later generations of the family to lives of abject poverty.

David Stoker

November 2014

**The Berry family of  
Norwich**

